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THE NICARAGUA CANAL AND THE MONROE
DOCTRINE.

Lord Salisbury remarked a short time ago, in reply to some Liberal criticism, that he did not make up his foreign policy, he inherited it. Our own Secretaries of State are not so fortunate, for they have inherited, not policies but questions, and most of these are encumbered with estoppels of the past.

As for the American people—they decide these diplomatic questions off hand, as they come up, by instinct. Or to be more exact, two sets of diplomatic instincts seem to pervade our public mind, and it is only on rare occasions that our decisions are unanimous. On the one hand, our Monroe Doctrine impels us to keep the hand of Europe—or of late, more specifically, the paw of the British lion—off the entire American Continent; while at the same time, our inherited dread of entangling foreign alliances often makes us hesitate to act when the crucial moment has arrived.

The people of England and the United States are, indeed, of the same race, and it is true enough—as an editorial writer of the New York *Herald* has lately remarked—that “blood is thicker than water.” Blood is not thicker than land, however, and it is over the latter element that our disputes with Great Britain always seem to arise. We have long become accustomed to look upon the western half of the earth’s surface as ours, while England’s ambition seems to be to dominate the whole. To a certain extent, therefore, we both desire the same thing; and when even blood relations have their heart’s desire set upon the acquisition of a single object, there is apt to be quarreling in the best regulated families.

The case of John Bull versus Uncle Jonathan *in re* Nicaraguan Canal Route is indeed a long and complicated one, and, with the space at my disposal, a bare outline of the issue must suffice.*

Diplomatic questions for the most part have their roots in geography or ethnography. Disputes over boundaries, and controversies about peoples, fill at least three quarters of the nations’ blue books. Both elements enter into the present difficulty.

From the mouth of the San Juan on the Atlantic coast, a natural waterway extends through Nicaragua to within a few miles of the Pacific Ocean. This route of transit between the seas has long been an object of regard by the maritime nations of the west, and on this account Nicaragua’s territory and people have both become subjects of international importance. The land itself is, moreover, divided longitudinally by the Cordillera range of mountains, into two distinct geographic sections. There is the Mosquito coast on the east, densely wooded, rather damp and insalubrious, and only fitted for extractive industry. The trade winds lose the greater part of their moisture in crossing the

* A detailed account of this whole question will be found in the author’s book on “Interoceanic Transit: Its History and Significance,” now on press.

range, however, and the region on the other side, round about the lakes, consisting mostly of plain lands and valleys, is well adapted to sub-tropical economic advance.

Aztec emigrants from Mexico settled in pre-historic times upon this fertile Nicaraguan depression toward the west, and there built up their semi-civilization. Having no immediate use for the lands across the mountains, these primitive Americans left the savages of the eastern seaboard undisturbed, and thus the line of geographic division became even in the early days one of ethnic demarcation as well.

In their search for a westerly route to the Indies, the Spaniards discovered this country from the east, and at once took possession of several points along the shore. Neither the land nor its wild inhabitants offered any attractions to the European gold-seekers, and little attempt was made to colonize the shore. The discovery of the Pacific soon gave rise to voyages of South Sea discovery as well, and it was from the west, therefore, that the rich lands of Nicaragua were finally opened up.

The conquerors made short work of the Aztec colonists they found there, and soon brought the Nicaraguan depression completely under their control. With such riches before them, they ceased to trouble themselves further about the lands they had discovered along the eastern coast, and so they too left the Indian tribes in peace, except for the occasional raids of their slave hunters. The Spanish colonists of the interior must needs have an outlet on the Atlantic, however, not only to facilitate their own export trade with the mother country, but also in order that the still richer products of Peru might find a convenient route of transit to the eastern coast and Spain. They strained a point, therefore, and with some difficulty secured control of the San Juan River. With their immediate necessities thus provided for, the Spaniards pushed their conquest no further, but left the Indians of the eastern coast to their own devices.

Being first upon the scene, Spain was soon able to secure a monopoly of the entire West Indian and Southern American trade. No nation dared yet oppose her openly, but this did not prevent private citizens of rival powers from leaguings themselves together against their common enemies the Spaniards, into what was known as the "Freebooter Republic." After gaining a foothold on an uninhabited island of the West Indies, these buccaneers soon saw that fortune favored their piratical designs along the unoccupied eastern shores of the mainland. They at once cultivated the friendship of the Indians, making common cause with the natives there against their enemies the slave hunters, and thus, in the end, were enabled to establish themselves securely among the lagoons of the Mosquito Shore, on the Bay Islands off the Honduras coast, and in Belize along the eastern shores of Yucatan. From these vantage grounds the freebooters then swept the Spanish Main in their swift-sailing craft, and played havoc with the richly laden homeward-bound galleons of the Spaniards.

The majority of these buccaneers were Englishmen, and Spain accordingly protested vigorously against their acts at the English Court. England avoided the question at first by denying her own subjects and by disavowing their acts. Cromwell came into power soon after, however, and, in accordance with his vigorous foreign policy, he decided to make use of the hardy buccaneers, and so gain a foothold for England in the West Indies. His mind was set on Cuba, but failing in this, his secret expedition secured Jamaica for Great Britain in 1655.

Spain was by this time thoroughly alarmed, and fearing lest the conquests should go further, offered to treat with England now, on the basis of what each had thus far secured. The American treaty was accordingly concluded between the two powers in 1670, whereby it was agreed "that the most serene king of Great Britain, his heirs and successors, shall have, hold, keep, and enjoy forever, with plenary right of

sovereignty, dominion possession and proprietary, all those lands, regions, islands, colonies and places whatsoever, being or situated in the West Indies, or any part of America which the said king of Great Britain or his subjects do at present hold and possess."

Being now herself a West Indian power, the activities of the freebooters were as annoying to England as they had been to Spain before, so she at once set about extirpating the confederacy. Not wishing to proceed against her own countrymen in the matter, England took care to inform her buccaneers of her intention beforehand, advising them moreover, to abandon their piratical raids and settle down along the eastern shore among their Indian friends, as peaceable log-cutters instead. In this way England evidently hoped to continue to "hold and possess" the points of advantage thus far acquired on the mainland, and bring them thus *ex post facto* under the terms of the treaty of 1670.

While the English freebooters were settling their final accounts with the Spanish colonists of the interior before retiring to the coast, another important element was added to the ethnography of the Mosquito Shore. In 1650 a Dutch slave ship, homeward bound from Guinea, was wrecked off the coast, and in the confusion a large body of negroes escaped to the shore. The Indians received them kindly and took them into their tribe. From this strange amalgamation of two such distinct ethnic stocks, a hybrid race—since known as the Mosquito Indians—rapidly grew up, and soon spread itself out along the shore from Cape Gracias à Dios to the Blewfields Lagoon. On their return to the coast in 1688, the English buccaneers also took pains to make friends with the strangers, and soon re-established their authority over the tribe, taking up their permanent abode now among the lagoons of the shore in the capacity of wood-cutters. Wishing to cement their newly formed peaceable connections with their fellow-countrymen of Jamaica, the English then sent Jeremy, the young Mosquito chief, across the Main

with a petition to the governor that he might be taken under the protection of the British crown. The English governor of Jamaica still had his doubt as to the pacific intent of the ex-pirates, and refused to take any official action in Jeremy's behalf. In his private capacity, he did, however, commission the Mosquito chief to bring back fifty warriors and hunt down runaway slaves in Jamaica. An English vessel was placed at Jeremy's disposal, with plenty of rum for the voyage—the contract was faithfully fulfilled on both sides, and on this informal basis the British protectorate over Mosquitoland was established.

In 1739 England was involved in open war with Spain over matters arising from the question of the Austrian Succession, and could thenceforth pursue her policy of further encroachment in America more openly. It was considered useless to attack the Spaniards at home, so the Spanish Main became the centre of this more especial maritime conflict between the two rival powers in the New World. English agents were accordingly sent out from Jamaica, to Belize and Mosquitoland, in order to unite the scattered settlers there, and stir up the natives to a determined revolt against the Spanish colonists of the interior. The protectorate over the Mosquito Shore was now proclaimed in due form, Belize was connected more closely with Mosquitoland by the formal acquisition of the Bay Islands, and definite plans were also laid to extend the British dominion to the Pacific by the seizure of the San Juan and the transit route. Peace being declared at this juncture in Europe, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, further military operations in Central America were for the time at least suspended. The British agents remained, however, in the capacity of Superintendents of the Shore, and English rule continued to be maintained, as before, from Belize to the Blewfields Lagoon.

The Seven Years' War again abrogated treaty relations between England and Spain in 1756, and in spite of his effort at conciliation, Pitt found Spain taking the side of

France in the American phase of this controversy known as the "French and Indian War." England's navy and her American colonists proved too much for this Franco-Spanish alliance, however, and in the treaty of Paris, 1763, Great Britain was again in a position to dictate terms to her rivals. Spain was obliged to give up Florida to her successful opponent, and compelled also to allow British subjects the right to cut wood all along Central America's eastern sea board. In return for this last favor, England indeed, agreed to demolish the fortifications she had erected along the coast and withdraw her troops; but as she had now acquired by law the right she had thus far been fighting for, force was no longer of any immediate use. Belize was then made an independent British settlement, while Mosquitoland became henceforth a more or less regular adjunct of Jamaica.

At the outbreak of the American Revolutionary struggle Spain again took sides with France, according to the terms of her Bourbon Alliance, made under the pressure of the Seven Years' War. England was therefore the more determined now on completely breaking Spain's power in America by seizing the transit route through Nicaragua, and thus severing the mainland colonies in twain. A powerful expedition was accordingly fitted out in Jamaica, with Captain Polson in command of the troops, and Admiral Nelson—then a young post-captain—in charge of the fleet and transports. The English settlers of the shore at the same time marshaled their Indian allies for the attack, and the whole force then pushed up the San Juan in a body. Everything went well at first, as the Spanish colonists were able to offer but little resistance. Fever, contracted on the coast, soon broke out among the troops, however; Nelson himself was one of the first to be taken down, and before this last unexpected enemy the whole expedition was in the end obliged to retreat with great loss. By this time also the tide had at last begun to turn against England in the

north. Having her own flesh and blood to contend against on this second occasion, Great Britain was forced to submit, and Spanish-America, in spite of the futile part she had played in the struggle, was generously allowed to share in the spoils. In the treaty of Versailles, 1783, Great Britain was reluctantly forced to give up all claims to the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Shore, and rest content henceforth with certain usufructuary rights in Belize. Her settlers, who had at least held their own on the shore, still refused to submit to such terms, however, and there were many in England who supported their claim. The government was nevertheless firm in the matter and, having promised in the treaty of Versailles, felt called upon to keep its word. So in 1786 a supplementary treaty was concluded with Spain, whereby England again agreed to give up the Bay Islands and Mosquitoland, in return for some further usufructuary rights in Belize. The settlers were now forced to retire to Yucatan, though their friends of the opposition still maintained that by abandoning the Mosquito protectorate Great Britain had "hung up her degradation in all the courts of Europe."

With the Spain of Napoleon England was again at war in 1796, and the treaties of 1783 and 1796 were no longer regarded as binding either by the home government or by the settlers in Central America. Finding the Carib Indians of the Island of St. Vincent too much attached to French interests, the West Indian authorities boldly deported them in a body—to the number of four thousand—and, in derogation of Spain's rights, landed them all on the Bay Islands. Infuriated at this fresh act of aggression the Spanish colonists then made a last desperate effort on their own account to drive the English settlers from Belize. The settlers repelled the attack, and under the cover of the guns of a British frigate, they began to extend the boundaries of their settlement far into the interior. The colonists having taken the initiative and instituted the attack, the settlers accordingly announced, that the land of Belize now belonged

to them by the paramount right of conquest and no longer under the treaty of 1786. England, it is true, at the close of the Peninsular war, revived the treaties of 1783 and 1786 *in toto* with the restored Spanish Government; but then the facts of the matter no longer fitted the case, and in this unsatisfactory condition the affair was finally left.

While English colonists, our people paid but little attention to this struggle between Spain and Great Britain for control of the West Indies and Central America; on the one hand because we were still loyal to the mother-land in matters of external politics, and again because our own internal affairs absorbed our entire attention. After we had secured our independence and become the first republic of the New World, the whole Spanish-American question appeared to us in quite a different light. As a young nation we stood for freedom, and, in the early enthusiasm of success, we soon came to regard the entire American Continent as the destined home of the free, and consequently under our protection.

The Spanish-American States to the south of us one by one also freed themselves in time from European control, and modeled their republican institutions after those of the United States. A strong reaction against constitutionalism at the same time set in among the States of eastern Europe. Already Russia, Prussia, Austria, France and Spain had leagued themselves together in their so-called Holy Alliance to crush out liberal ideas. The Czar's government soon after began to encroach upon our northwest territory, and the rumor was spread abroad that the Holy Alliance had determined to restore to Ferdinand of Spain his colonies in America.

George Canning, the English Foreign Secretary, was fearful of the designs of his Continental rivals, both in Europe and in America. As a counter stroke he, therefore, suggested that the United States unite with Great Britain in a joint protest against any further European interference in the affairs of the American Continent. This was precisely

John Quincy Adams' idea, but seeing no reason why England should be made an exception to our national policy, he refused the proffered co-operation, and induced President Monroe to act alone in the matter, along the lines thus laid down. We still admitted Great Britain as at least a silent partner in our Monroe Doctrine, however, for "with existing colonies or dependencies of any European power," we expressly declined to interfere, and thus left England secure in the possessions she had thus far acquired and maintained in America. It was rather the independent Spanish-American States which were henceforth to be under our protection, though these too we left free to develop in their own way.

Spanish-America was naturally enthusiastic over the stand we had taken. The patriot Bolivar accordingly proposed a congress of all independent American States, under the leadership of the United States, to take counsel for their continued safety and prosperity. Adams was then President and he, with his Secretary of State, Henry Clay, were both highly in favor of the plan. Congress, and the people of the United States generally, supported them with enthusiasm, but the Senate was opposed. The Spanish-American States had gone further in the cause of freedom than we had dared to go, as they one and all had by this time abolished the institution of slavery. It was on the program of the Panama Congress, moreover, to recognize the independence of the negro republic of Hayti, and such a proceeding our Senate, as then constituted, could in no way be expected to tolerate. Slavery was already a tender subject in Washington, and the President's forces soon found themselves compelled to give up the contest. Without our hearty co-operation the Panama Congress came to nothing, and, now that the fear of immediate European interference had for the present passed away, Spanish-America was again left to her own erratic devices.

The idea of the Monroe Doctrine was still kept alive, it is true, by the Central American States and a few American

canal enthusiasts, but the great body of the American people were too busy developing their own land to pay much attention to the matter, and the Government of the United States ceased to take any active part in the issue. Great Britain, on the other hand, soon grew jealous of our continued western advance, and determined to parallel us both to the north and to the south, by extending her power through Canada to the western seaboard, and by securing her long-desired control of the route of transit across Central America to the Pacific.

The methods employed by both powers in their advance toward the west were identical. Settlers and frontiersmen of each nation were allowed to go forth into Indian or Spanish-American lands, and there gain rights as squatters. Trouble was sure to arise with the people upon whose territory these settlers encroached, and in every such case the two powerful governments would interfere in behalf of their outraged citizens and thus secure control. Neither party cared to interfere directly, however, with the territorial advance of the other, and so the northwest boundary line was run between Canada and the United States with only jealous grumbling on either side.

England's advance across Canada we were easily able to watch across the boundary line, but to her doings in Central America we paid not the slightest attention. Unnoticed by us, her settlers in Belize extended their boundaries into Guatemala, and renewed their old friendship with the Mosquito Indians. They soon arranged the succession to the crown of Mosquitoland to suit themselves and finally induced one king, Sambo, to appoint, before his death, the English Superintendent of Belize regent of the Mosquito Shore during the minority of the heir-apparent, with the further request that the Church of England and Ireland be established in the land. The English regency being formally inaugurated, the settlers then demanded Nicaragua's recognition of the same, and, to give more color to the request—

with the timely assistance of a British warship—they occupied temporarily the port of the San Juan. Nicaragua refused to recognize the sovereignty thus claimed for Mosquitoland, and, without the aid of the home government, the settlers were unable to press their demands.

Just at this juncture the United States acquired the Californian seaboard through its successful war with Mexico, and our territory thus formed one broad belt stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, through the very heart of the northern continent. Lord Palmerston now deemed it high time for his government to act officially; for Great Britain and the United States seemed destined henceforth to be rivals on the Pacific as well, and the only adequate route to this western ocean lay across the American Isthmus. The claim of the Belize settlers was accordingly taken up by the British home government and Nicaragua was officially given to understand that the territorial right of the Mosquito king extended to the mouth of the San Juan. Nicaragua again refused to recognize the claim and appealed once more to the United States for aid. We had no knowledge to act upon, however, and before any steps could be taken, an English naval force had seized upon the port of the San Juan itself and compelled Nicaragua, at the point of the bayonet, to abandon forever all right over the mouth of the stream. The Nicaraguan officials were thus forced to give place to an Anglo-Mosquito administration, and the port was now called "Greytown" in honor of Governor Grey, of Jamaica, who had so successfully planned the campaign.

In the meanwhile the discovery of gold in California induced an immense tide of emigration from our eastern States to these rich western lands. The "Great American Desert" was then thought to be practically impassable and capitalists were quick to see that rich profits could be gained by establishing some direct route of transit to the west, more adequate than the toilsome journey in prairie-schooners across the plains, or the perilous sea voyage around the

Horn. With the germs of secession in the air it was also highly important from a political point of view to bind this new western territory more closely to the life of the east by the links of trade and commerce. Thus the eyes of both the people and the government of the United States were suddenly turned toward the long-neglected Isthmus. The government was at first for avoiding the Nicaraguan issue, and, having failed to secure a right of way across Tehuantepec from Mexico, the administration turned to New Grenada and secured from that State a monopoly of transit across the Isthmus of Panama. No European power opposed us here, so we did not hesitate to assert our control and take upon ourselves an exclusive guarantee of the route.

American capitalists were not so cautious as their government, however, and, seeing the advantages the Nicaraguan route afforded for an immediate route of transit to the Pacific, they at once secured concessions on their own account from that all too willing State, sufficient to provide for all present and future contingencies. They soon found England held the key to the situation, however, and so as usual appealed to their government for aid. Polk was then President, but both he and his Secretary of State, Buchanan, were still ignorant of the true nature of the British claim. An agent, Elijah Hise, was accordingly sent out to inquire into the situation, but expressly instructed not to enter into any treaty stipulations with Nicaragua before advising the Washington authorities. Upon his arrival in Nicaragua Hise saw that no time was to be lost if American rights were to be preserved; so throwing aside his instructions, he fell back on the Monroe Doctrine for support, and, in a formal treaty, guaranteed Nicaragua's paramount right of sovereignty from sea to sea over the whole territory she had claimed, and that, too, in the very face of England's adverse possession of Greytown and the entire Mosquito Shore. The nature of this treaty was at once spread abroad through the press, the American people seemed eager for its immediate

enforcement, and, amid this rejuvenated enthusiasm over the Monroe Doctrine, the Polk Administration came to an end without taking any further action in the matter.

Polk's successor, General Taylor, now found himself in a quandary. He had no majority in the Senate, and the press of the opposition was only too eager to trip him up. If he decided to push the Hise treaty through, Taylor felt there was a strong probability of his being led into a war with Great Britain, and, without the united support of the Senate, such a policy he deemed to be fatal. If, on the other hand, he were to disavow Hise's acts, he knew the people would at once be up in arms, accusing him and his administration of pusillanimity before British aggression. On the horns of this dilemma Taylor, or more properly his Secretary of State, John M. Clayton, attempted to avoid both issues by pursuing a midway course.

To this end, another diplomatic agent, E. G. Squier, was sent off at once to Nicaragua, with full power to enter into treaty stipulations with that State, but with definite instructions not to involve the United States "in any entangling alliances or any unnecessary controversy." Squier's task was a well-nigh impossible one. To enforce the contract the canal company had made with Nicaragua meant sure conflict with England, while not to enforce it involved a total abandonment of the American right of way. Squier chose the former alternative, but in a modified form, in the hopes of avoiding any serious outbreak on Great Britain's part. He accordingly accepted the company's contract, and undertook to guarantee the neutrality of the canal route at least from sea to sea, for his government. Then mindful of his instructions, and in the vain hope of neutralizing the issue, Squier had a further clause inserted in both the contract and the treaty, to the effect that his government sought no exclusive control over the canal, and therefore invited all other nations to enter into like treaty arrangements with Nicaragua for the joint guarantee of the route.

By making the canal thus free to all nations, Squier evidently intended to nullify England's claim, and allow American capital to proceed at once with the work.

While he was thus engaged in Nicaragua the English agent Mr. Chatfield—with the aid of a British ship of war—was actively pressing an old claim against Honduras for a debt said to be due to one of Her Majesty's subjects. Now the canal route as then planned, was to terminate on the Pacific in the Bay of Fonseca, which separates the State of Honduras from Nicaragua on the west. In this bay—and directly at the proposed mouth of the canal—lies Tigre Island, belonging to Honduras, and this, Squier understood, was the real object of Chatfield's diplomacy. Hastening to the Honduras capital, in order to checkmate his rival, Squier at once entered into treaty relations with the authorities there, and succeeded in securing for the United States Government the possession of this strategic island. Chatfield, hearing of this *coup*, sent word to the Pacific squadron to meet him off the Bay of Fonseca, and hurried across Honduras to be on hand himself. With a naval force again to support him, Chatfield then seized upon Tigre Island in the name of the crown, as an indemnity for the debt still unpaid. Squier then informed Chatfield that the British were on United States territory, and, receiving no satisfaction from this, he ordered the English to evacuate the island at once, and added that if his request were not complied with within six days, his government would consider it an act of aggression, and proceed accordingly.

In the meantime Abbott Lawrence, our Minister to England, by searching the archives in London, had succeeded in making out a strong historical case against British encroachments in Central America, and was prepared to maintain any application of the Monroe Doctrine his government might decide upon. With the issue thus directly before him, Clayton recognized that his policy of conciliation had failed, and, rather than press the matter to its

logical conclusion, he decided to make what terms he could with Great Britain at once. So he frankly told Lord Palmerston the predicament he was in, and suggested that the immediate controversy between England and the United States be buried, by the two nations co-operating in the construction and control of the canal. There was something inspiring in the idea of these two great nations of the Anglo-Saxon race, working thus in harmony for the peaceful commerce of the world, and Clayton hoped by this stroke, to transform the present indignation of the American people into a spirit of international enthusiasm.

Lord Palmerston scarcely looked for so speedy a recognition of his claims, and of course willingly accepted Clayton's proposals. Sir Henry Bulwer was accordingly dispatched as a special envoy to Washington, to treat with Clayton directly along the lines he had proposed. Bulwer's first request was that Squier and all his acts and treaties be disavowed. This Clayton readily consented to, and thereby made England, for the first time, an acknowledged exception to the Monroe Doctrine. Sir Henry then suggested that the United States and Great Britain henceforth treat directly with each other in regard to canal matters, and no longer indirectly through Nicaragua. In agreeing to this proposition Clayton went further, and formally recognized England's claim to the mouth of the San Juan, which up to this he had strenuously denied.

On this one-sided basis the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was then drawn up. Therein each party agreed never to "obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship canal" nor to "exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America." In return for these mutual (?) favors, the two powers then arranged to co-operate in the construction and control of this and any future transit-way which might be laid across the isthmus. The treaty was concluded in a hurry, and then pushed through the Senate, by the

supporters of the administration, with extraordinary haste. No Senator seemed to comprehend the true nature of the instrument, though a general feeling prevailed that Great Britain had definitely retreated from her Mosquito protectorate, before a vigorous assertion of American rights.

Having seen his treaty pass safely through the ordeal of the Senate, Sir Henry Bulwer then felt his position to be reasonably secure, and at once dispatched a memorandum to Clayton to the effect that, his government did not "understand the engagements of that convention to apply to Her Majesty's settlement at Honduras or its dependencies." Clayton replied at once that this reservation was distinctly understood by the Senate, and, without troubling himself to lay so trifling a matter before that body, he simply filed Sir Henry Bulwer's note away among the archives of the State Department. Ignorant of the real nature of the convention, and totally unaware of the all important reservation Sir Henry had succeeded in tacking onto the original instrument, the President then proclaimed the treaty on the fifth of July, 1850.

Results now materialized very rapidly. The American Canal Company, still thinking themselves secure in their rights, opened up temporary transit facilities across Nicaragua, and established their headquarters on the outskirts of Greytown. Colonists and adventurers flocked in, and soon a thriving American settlement was established. The British Government, on its part, immediately sent warships to the scene in order to maintain both its Anglo-Mosquito administration at Greytown, and its protectorate over the entire coast as a "dependency" of Honduras. The Americans protested, and all was confusion once more.

President Taylor's death occurred only a week after his promulgation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and thus the burden of this new dispute fell upon Fillmore's Secretary of State, Daniel Webster. His attempt to straighten matters out along the lines his predecessor had laid down, proved

utterly ineffectual, however, and upon this second failure, Great Britain made her final move in the controversy, by proclaiming the Bay Islands also a colony of the crown, and a dependency of Honduras.

A storm of indignation against the British then broke out in the United States. Congress took the matter up with great vigor, and in the course of the heated discussion which followed, Sir Henry Bulwer's important reservation at last came to light. The Senate was non-plussed at the revelation, and Senator after Senator, who had voted for the treaty, declared he would never had done so, had he understood the true nature of the case. Concerning the Mosquito protectorate there was now little to be said, as Clayton had practically allowed this British claim. The seizure of the Bay Islands, however, being subsequent to the promulgation of the convention, was evidently a flagrant violation of the treaty, and so the Senate declared it to be. England was now openly accused of bad faith, and an immediate abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was demanded. Both powers increased their fleets in the West Indies and a serious crisis seemed imminent. The British had a war in the East on their hands at this time and did not care to enter into fresh complications in the west. Secure in her possessions and with the Clayton-Bulwer treaty still in force, England accordingly bided her time, feeling sure the present excitement would abate. Only one serious outbreak occurred, involving the rights of the two signatory powers. This was in Greytown, and resulted from a quarrel between the American settlers there and the Anglo-Mosquito authorities of the port. An American man-of-war appeared upon the scene and, meeting with no opposition, proceeded to bombard and destroy the town. The British Government still declined to interfere, and the issue soon after took an entirely different turn. Civil war had broken out again in Nicaragua, and in the midst of the struggle, General Walker, the famous American filibuster, landed his little band of adventurers

there, and before long had the affairs of the country completely in his hands. The United States Government was at first disposed to support the rule of the adventurer, and more particularly as British agents were reported to be aiding Costa Rica in opposition to his course. Walker was evidently working entirely in the interests of the slaveholding States, however, as one of his first acts as pseudo-president of Nicaragua, was to re-establish the institution of slavery in that land. This turned the Spanish Americans, regardless of party, against him, and cost him also the undivided support of the government at Washington. So our navy had finally to interfere, and deport the now unpopular Walker from the scenes of his filibustering enterprise.

With the *status quo* established in Central America and the Crimean War fought and won, the original issue between Great Britain and the United States was bound to come up again. This Central American imbroglio had altogether changed the aspect of affairs, however, and neither party was as eager now as before in its claims. Walker had destroyed the last vestiges of transit across Nicaragua, the Panama Railway was already in operation, and there was even talk of constructing lines across the American Desert itself. Thus the Nicaragua Canal once more became a question of the more or less indefinite future, to be dealt with accordingly.

Experience had amply proved to us the futility of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty at all events, and Buchanan, when he became President, fully decided to call upon Congress for its immediate abrogation. With the exception of Greytown, England's territorial interests in Central America were as secure as before, and, with an eye to the future, she was now bent on retaining all the rights over the canal route she had been able to acquire so easily through Clayton's obliging acquiescence. Lord Napier, the British Minister, was equal to the occasion, and, recognizing from

the outset Buchanan's determination, he began at once on a policy of conciliation. He accordingly informed the President that Her Majesty's government had decided to give up the Bay Islands and abandon the Mosquito protectorate forever. A special envoy, Sir William Ouseley, was even then on his way to America, he added, to arrange the matter satisfactorily with Honduras and Nicaragua. In consideration of these facts Lord Napier begged Buchanan not to stir up controversy again by calling for the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty at that time. Buchanan proved himself to be as much of a tyro in diplomacy as Clayton had been before him. He did not ask that England should continue to treat with the United States in the matter. He simply promised that he would not bring the matter up before Congress, as he had intended, but would await the results of Ouseley's mission.

Having thus gained her point so easily England took plenty of time and allowed the question to die out of the minds of even the American people before arranging matters in Central America to suit herself. In settling with Guatemala Great Britain secured a legal title for her settlers over all the land that they had encroached upon, making modern British Honduras some five times the size of the original Belize. The Bay Islands were indeed unreservedly abandoned according to the terms of our demand, but it was in dealing with Nicaragua that England exhibited her best diplomacy. The protectorate over the Mosquito Shore was nominally given up, it is true; but it was so arranged that the Indians were to be left unmolested in a so-called Reserve, covering about the same area as their quondam independent kingdom. Within these limits the Mosquito Indians were to exercise full power of local government, and for ten years the State of Nicaragua was to pay them an annual indemnity. Greytown was, furthermore, constituted a free port, practically beyond Nicaragua's control, but it was provided that certain custom duties should be levied there to meet the

Mosquito indemnity. Finally, in case Nicaragua should attempt to interfere in any way with the autonomy of the Indian Reservation, or should fail to pay the indemnity at the appointed times, Great Britain reserved to herself the right to interfere in behalf of her former allies. To put it briefly, England abandoned her *positive* protectorate with one stroke of the pen and immediately re-established a *negative* protectorate with another, and Nicaragua, left to her own devices, was forced to agree to the terms.

These three treaties were now laid before President Buchanan for approval, and, having presumably studied their contents, he officially declared himself to be *entirely satisfied* with the result. Thus the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was maintained, England lost none of her rights, except her temporary dominion over Tigre and the Bay Islands, and the United States was now formally estopped from further objection to the events of the past.

There the matter rested without further discussion until De Lesseps, in 1879, began his operations in Panama. It was then proposed by the French enthusiast that the powers of Europe undertake a joint international guaranty of this southern route. Now we had already guaranteed the neutrality of the Isthmus of Panama as far back as 1848 and successfully preserved the same, moreover, during all the subsequent years. The American people, basing their opinion on the official surveys of their government, were indeed strongly in favor now of the Nicaraguan route; still they could not well countenance European control over any part of the Isthmus and be consistent. President Hayes therefore boldly declared in a message to Congress that the policy of this government was henceforth for a canal under exclusive American control, and Secretary of State Blaine was further instructed to inform the powers of our new decision. The Panama Canal project, with its international guarantee, was already doomed to failure and the Continental powers consequently did not feel called upon to reply to Blaine's

circular letter. Great Britain took care to draw our attention to the fact, however, that by the terms of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty she must still remain an exception to our policy of exclusive control. Blaine then attempted to refute this claim and went to great lengths in his reply to Lord Granville's note to point out the historical weakness of England's position. Lord Granville answered that he had Buchanan's word for it that we were "entirely satisfied" and that, therefore, the question of British right was no longer open to discussion.

President Arthur next conceived the idea of taking the matter entirely into American hands by having the United States Government construct the canal and control it through the natural right of ownership. To this end Secretary Frelinghuysen secured a treaty with Nicaragua granting us all necessary rights, and on this basis he then appealed to Lord Granville again to abrogate or modify the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. Lord Granville politely but positively declined to entertain any such proposition and Arthur was accordingly unable to mature his plans. President Cleveland withdrew the Frelinghuysen-Zavala treaty from the Senate and the canal project was once more thrown open to private American initiative.

Since then the Maritime Canal Company has made strenuous efforts to push through the construction of the canal on the basis of a governmental guarantee at least. In the face of English objections, resting on existing treaty stipulations, Congress has thus far been loath to take definite action in the matter, and rumor now has it that financial aid is being sought by the American promoters from private parties in England. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the question of American control over the canal route has again reached the critical stage, and the Monroe Doctrine seems likely before long to be tested once more in the case.

In the meantime events have been maturing in Nicaragua

which have exercised an important bearing on the present diplomatic situation. As might have been expected, Nicaragua failed to keep her promises to Great Britain in regard to the Mosquito Reserve. Soon after the signing of the treaty the Nicaraguan authorities began to interfere with the autonomy of the Indians, and the promised indemnity gradually fell into arrears. Great Britain waited long enough to secure a good case and then, in 1881, had the matter laid before the Emperor of Austria for arbitration. The decision was, of course, in her favor, as Nicaragua had certainly violated the terms of the treaty. Nicaragua's right of sovereignty over the Mosquito Indians and their Reserve was now even more explicitly denied by the imperial arbitrator and England was furthermore given express power to interfere in their behalf. Thereupon the English settlers once more openly resumed control over Mosquitoland and continued to rule over the reservation as before in the name of the Mosquito chief.

A number of Americans had by this time established themselves along the shore and were building up a lucrative banana trade with the United States. American influence thus became considerable in the Reserve, but, unfortunately for the diplomatic issues involved, the business interests of these fruit dealers strongly favored the rule of the English settlers. Under the revived Anglo-Mosquito administration, and with the support of the American settlers, Mosquitoland soon became a flourishing State, as the fruit and wood trade began to assume considerable importance. Therewith the jealousy of the Nicaraguans grew accordingly and trouble was bound to break out. The crisis came about in 1893 when Nicaragua and Honduras were engaged in one of those periodical conflicts which have marked the independent history of the Central American States. The forces of Honduras occupied Cape Gracias à Dios and threatened to invade the Reserve. Acting on this excuse Nicaragua marched her troops into the Reservation, pulled down the Mosquito

flag and proclaimed martial law over both Indians and settlers. The British Consul, Mr. Hatch, protested, and both American and English war vessels were sent to restore order. Our ship, the old Kearsarge, was wrecked off the coast and the British forces were thus left free to act as they would in behalf of their government. English marines were accordingly landed and a provisional government set up in the interest of the foreign residents of the shore. The Americans were asked to join in, but, in spite of the earnestness of the British request, they wisely refused to become involved. The United States Government then entered a firm protest against this renewed English occupation, and Great Britain deemed it best to comply in this case by withdrawing her forces.

Left to themselves again the foreign residents then combined against Nicaraguan rule, and foolishly attempted to establish a joint government of English and Americans for "business purposes" over the Reserve. Neither the United States nor Great Britain—considering their peculiar relations to each other, and to Nicaragua—could well support such action on the part of their respective citizens, and so Nicaragua was again left free to take such action as she would, against the foreigners. The second crisis came about in July, 1894, with an open conflict between Nicaragua and the settlers. The British Government held entirely aloof this time, so at the request of the Nicaraguan Commissioner, Captain O'Neil, of the United States navy, landed his marines and restored order. The Nicaraguan authorities of the interior then protested against such action on the part of the United States, and in August sent a strong force to the coast and reassumed control over the Reserve. Two Americans and several Englishmen—among the latter Mr. Hatch—were then arrested by the Nicaraguan authorities, carried off to Managua, and subsequently banished from the land.

Our government was thus placed in an anomalous position.

We were bound to support Nicaragua over against Great Britain by the very logic of the case, and yet we had to proceed against her now for violation of the right of certain American citizens. Now Nicaragua we knew was bent upon incorporating the Reserve into her own territory, and in this she had always had our support; but, by the terms of her treaty with England, this could only be done with the consent of the Indians themselves. The United States Government therefore simply demanded that Nicaragua raise the decree of banishment from her citizens, and without seeking further redress, endeavored to persuade the Indians to abandon their British friends and voluntarily incorporate themselves into the Nicaraguan State. American influence on the shore, strange to say, proved strong enough to bring about this result, and on November 20, 1894, the decision was formally made. Having provided for such a contingency in her treaty, England could not now object, though she could never have looked for such a result during the days of her supremacy. Thus for once, and at last, fortune seems to have favored the American side of the question; but in Central America one can never be sure how long existing conditions will prevail, and with Great Britain still to be dealt with, the solution of the problem is yet to come.

England we know has since retaliated by demanding from Nicaragua an indemnity of \$75,000 for Hatch's arrest, and in default of immediate payment, she seized upon, and held temporarily, the town and port of Corinto at the western terminus of the proposed canal.

Our hands were tied in the matter, and our government could not well interfere, as two of Hatch's associates were American citizens for whom we too had demanded redress from Nicaragua on the same grounds. The indemnity was paid in some way, however, and the British have been once more obliged to withdraw.

Thus the question stands to-day, and on the whole we

can say that, thanks to American influence in Mosquito-land, the position of our government over against Great Britain is already considerably improved. The Clayton-Bulwer treaty still stands, it is true, but then England exercises no control now over either end of the canal route, and such dominion was after all the main cause of our former weakness. With the canal route under the control of Nicaragua, we are back again, therefore, on the *status quo* of 1846, and but for the Clayton-Bulwer treaty we could treat with England accordingly on the old basis.

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The long controversy, here outlined, over the control of the Nicaraguan canal route, constitutes but the narrower issue of that larger struggle, which has been going on between Great Britain and the United States ever since the days of our political independence, for dominion of the American Continent. In conclusion it may, therefore, be well, to place this more or less detailed dispute, in its proper diplomatic environment, and show its relation to the larger issue involved.

Our own advance, it must be borne in mind, has been solely toward the west; while the course of England's supremacy has been eastward from the British Isles, as well as toward the west. The eastern water route to the Pacific, is, as we know, already under British control. Beginning with Gibraltar, strategic points mark Great Britain's way through the Mediterranean, past Malta and Cyprus, which are hers, to Egypt and the Suez canal, which are also practically under her control. On the other side, the outlet of the Red Sea is guarded by the two English protectorates of Aden and Somali, and the dependent Island of Perim in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. The islands of the Indian Ocean for the most part belong to England; the Indian peninsula, Ceylon, and Burmah form part of the British Empire; while the Straits Settlements, farther on, guard the outlet to the Pacific. The possession of Hong Kong and

her administrative control over the Chinese customs, advance Great Britain's influence to the north, along the eastern shores of Asia; North Borneo gives her a word to say in the affairs of Central Oceanica, and her title to Australia and New Zealand insure her dominion in the southeast.

England's eastern advance has been paralleled, however, by Russia overland; and the Slav has already reached the Pacific. Thus Russia constitutes Great Britain's strong rival in the far East, and since China's late defeat by the Japanese, the *status quo* of the two powers in these parts, has been seriously disturbed. England's Eastern Question, in other words, has also reached a critical stage, and any disturbance of her relations with Russia on the Pacific would react against her all along the line. In such an event, the northern frontier of India would certainly be threatened, the Dardanelles might possibly be opened to Russian fleets, and if France be really Russia's ally, the whole Egyptian controversy including the question of the control of the Suez Canal must necessarily be revived. Such in brief is the condition of affairs in the East, between Great Britain and Russia, the two main powers concerned.

Great Britain's advance toward the west was indeed interrupted for the time by the revolt of her American colonies, but by no means cut short. She still held Canada, and by paralleling our advance toward the Pacific, she has succeeded in the end, in cutting us off from our northwesterly outpost, Alaska. On the western coast of North America, England has the United States, therefore, as her Pacific rival, just as she has been obliged to face Russia along the eastern shores of Asia across the western sea.

But this dominion along the northwest does not tell the whole story of Great Britain's westerly advance toward the Pacific. The Bermuda Islands have long been hers in the Central Atlantic. To the southwest, the Bahamas and the Leeward and Windward Islands enclose the Caribbean Sea; the control of Jamaica has continued English supremacy in

the West Indies; while on either side of the Atlantic outlet of the future interoceanic canal, British Honduras and British Guiana guard the way. It was England's aim, as we know, to force her way directly through the isthmus to the Pacific, and it was fever, and not Spain, which prevented Nelson from accomplishing this object in the early days.

Continuing to be baffled in this last attempt, by the more or less determined attitude of the United States, England has employed her energies to good effect, meanwhile by binding the States of South America—and more particularly those of the west coast—to her commercial supremacy at least, by the bonds of trade and finance. Having reached the Pacific in this way by advancing toward the west as well, Great Britain's natural ambition must be to join the two ends of these lines of her supremacy, and thus encircle the globe. A move in this direction has lately been made toward the Hawaiian Islands, the "halfway-house" of the Pacific; but here again the United States government showed an incipient tendency to interfere, and there the matter stands to-day.

We Americans—chips from the old Anglo-Saxon block—are likewise a land-hungry race, and in our very infancy we declared that the whole Western Hemisphere, with the exception of the then British possessions, and with a nominal regard for Spanish and Portuguese claims, really belonged to us. We already had more land before us than we could conveniently swallow at once, however, and so we contented ourselves with the territory we had already acquired, and such as belonged to our weaker Spanish-American neighbor, allowing the European powers to take what they could of the rest. Great Britain, as we know, availed herself of the opportunity, and, having more experience in land gobbling than we, chose some of the nicest of tid-bits for herself.

We reached the Pacific, moreover, in a roundabout way, and passed over the American Desert, not finding it to our

immediate taste at the time. We then found ourselves, as we supposed, cut off from our western possessions and in endeavoring to hit upon a more suitable route to these parts, we recognized that our old rival barred the way. We at once set up a great hue and cry, but suddenly discovering that our own desert was passable after all, and not so useless as we had fancied it to be, we rested content for the while, being loath to take issue with so powerful an opponent.

Professor Turner now tells us that our American frontier has vanished. Our land is already occupied, and we are hungry again for more. True, we could crowd up a bit, but then Americans never could endure crowded conditions. We believe with Aristotle, that the best form of a democracy is that of an agricultural people, living for the most part away from the towns. Our republican institutions demand room, for it is only when confined that they cease to act, as we expect. Rather than adapt ourselves, therefore, to the more crowded conditions of the old world, we have in every case preferred to acquire more land and spread out as before.

If we may judge from the past history of mankind, this continued land-hunger of ours, is but a proof of our vigorous nationality, and not by any means to be looked upon with moral suspicion. Our nation is still growing, and our desire for Cuba and Hawaii must, therefore, be regarded rather as indications of our vitality. The real difficulty lies in the fact that our desires are beginning to outstrip our means. We know now what it is to be shut in on the north, and at last we seem to be thoroughly aroused against the danger of a like contingency on the south. Up to the present the question of our control over the Isthmus has been theoretical, rather than practical. Gradually, however, we have come to feel a pressing desire not only for the canal itself in the interests of our growing commerce, but also for the control of the route as a strategic necessity, and for the lands round about as sources of further wealth.

We recognize full well, moreover, that we still have Great Britain to deal with in the matter, and are finally preparing to face the issue frankly.

We have no racial quarrel with England. On the contrary, personal relations between Englishmen and Americans are usually cordial. The question has ever been simply and solely one regarding the possession and control of territory. England has forced her way to the east, and we do not object to her dominion there, as the matter does not concern us directly. We do chafe against Great Britain's continued control over parts of this Continent however, and jealously watch her every move in these parts. In one way the advantage is distinctly on our side, for we have but one struggle for supremacy on our hands, while Great Britain has two. It might, therefore, be good politics for us to assert ourselves, if not in conjunction, at least contemporaneously with England's eastern rival, Russia, and thus bring a double pressure to bear against Great Britain at the same time. At any rate, the issue is bound to come sooner or later, if the American nation is to grow, and, if I might risk a prophecy, I should venture to predict that it will be drawn ere long to the south of us, along the proposed route of the Nicaragua Canal.

A show of force is as good as force itself in these days, and force moreover is typified in our time by money as well as arms. England has already demonstrated both these truths again and again in her successful career, and we might do well in this case to learn from our rival. My idea would, therefore, be to let the Clayton-Bulwer treaty stand as it is, and to proceed at once, either as a nation or a government to construct the Nicaragua Canal, with money of our own. What we possess, we would certainly have a right to defend, and though we did not deny any theoretical control England might claim under the terms of the treaty, she would probably find it extremely difficult to assert her supremacy over land and a waterway which belonged exclusively to us. By

owning the majority of the stock of the Suez Canal, England has had little difficulty in maintaining her control of this route. Let us profit by the example, therefore, and establish our own supremacy over America's canal in somewhat the same way.

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